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Mr. SAMUEL HARVER's
Funeral SERMON,

Preach'd at

CROUCHED-FRYERS,

A P R I L 27, 1729.

22/5

MR. SAMUEL HARVEY,
Funeral Sermon.

Preached at
CROUCHBURY,
A.D. 1844.

236.
The Death of good Men, in the midst of
their Days, considered and improved.

A
Funeral SERMON

For the late Reverend

Mr. *SAMUEL HARVEY*,

Who deceased *April 17, 1729*. In the
31st Year of his Age.

Preach'd at

CROUCHED-FRYERS,
APRIL 27.

With some Enlargements.

By *W. HARRIS, D. D.*

*Published at the Desire of the Relations and
Congregation.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for *RICHARD FORD*, at the *Angel* in the *Poultry*,
near *Stock's-Market*. MDCCXXIX.

Wm. Hughes

A

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For the late Reverend

MR. SAMUEL HARVEY,

Who deceased August 17, 1799. In the
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CROUCHED-PRIEST,

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PSAL. cii. 23, 24.

He weakneth my strength in the way, he shortneth my days: I said, O God, take me not away in the midst of my days, for thy years are throughout all generations.

THIS psalm, without the name of its author, is entitled, *The prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.* It was probably composed at the end of the Babylonish captivity, or soon after the Jews return to their own country, when the temple lay in ruins; and the building of it met with great obstruction. This occasioned many mournful reflections and complaints; as he sometimes encourages himself in the hopes of God's faithfulness to his promise, and the honour it would be to his name in the eyes of the Gentile world.

The words I have read are of the former kind. *He weakneth my strength in the way, he shortneth my days:* The strength of nature began to fail in the midst of life: God seemed to threaten an immature death, and before the ordinary course of nature. This put him upon this prayer to God; *O God, take me not away in the midst of my days:* q. d. with relation to the case he had in view; "I hoped to have lived to see the finishing of the temple, and that I had been in a fair way to it; but the great opposition made to it,

B

" and

“ and the great decays I find in my self,
 “ make me fear I shall fail of the pleasing
 “ hopes: take me not away before it is com-
 “ plete, but suffer me to live to see thy pro-
 “ mise fulfilled.”

What the Psalmist here had only the apprehensions of concerning himself, is sometimes actually the case with other good men: *He weakneth their strength in the way, and shortens their days, and takes them away in the midst of their days.* Nothing is more affecting to considering minds, and more dark and unaccountable in present providence, than when eminently good and useful persons are removed in early life, while wicked and useless persons are spared to old age. It carries something strange in its appearance, and is contrary to nature. That old persons die, worn out with service, and decays of nature, is no wonder, and a less loss to the world; that is agreeable to the course of nature, and what every one expects. But when younger persons are cut off in the midst of their days, and the height of their usefulness, richly furnished, and ripe for service, like blossoms nip'd in the tender bud, which promised much fair fruit, *When one dies in his full strength, and wholly at ease, while their breasts are full of milk, and their bones of marrow:* this naturally strikes the mind with surprize and astonishment; and we are apt not only to grieve at the loss, but to be shocked at the appearance, and puzzled at the dispensation; and to say with the Psalmist on the like occasion;

The

*The day of his youth hast thou shortned; re-Pf. lxxxix.
member how short my time is— Wherefore*^{45. 47.}

hast thou made all men in vain! I believe you are all beforehand with me in this reflection upon this melancholy occasion; and I thought I could not more properly improve it, than by the consideration of this subject. I shall only propose,

I. To enquire into the reasons of this dispensation, and consider what account can be given of it.

II. To direct to the proper improvement, and shew how it may be made most useful to us. I shall speak a little distinctly to both.

I. I shall enquire into the *reasons* of it. And because the thing is strange in its first appearance, and apt to perplex and distress our minds; it will be the more needful to offer something to justify the divine conduct, remove the horror of the appearance, and reconcile and satisfy our minds about it.

1. There is the *Sovereignty* of the divine will. God is the Creator of the world, and the natural Lord of his own creation. *He made us, and not we our selves: and we are his, and not our own:* he has the right of disposal who is Proprietor and Lord, and may do his pleasure with his own creature: *He created all things, and for his pleasure they are and were created.* He is an *absolute* Sovereign, and he only is fit to be so; for he has an higher right to all his creatures, than they have to themselves, or to any thing they call their own: and he is fit to exercise such a power, who

is infinitely perfect, and can never mistake or use it ill. We have nothing to fear from one who acts under the conduct of infinite wisdom and goodness in all his ways.

His sovereignty and dominion extends to all his creatures in heaven and earth: *He doth his will in the armies of heaven, and among all the inhabitants of the earth beneath.* Angels move at his command, and always *do his will.* And it reaches to all the disposals, and all the circumstances of life: *He hath determined the bounds of our habitation, and the times before appointed:* the place of our birth and abode, and all the relations and conditions of life. Yea, it reaches to life itself; *for our life and our times are in his hand:* the different periods of our time in this world, and of our dissolution and departure out of it. *His days are determined, and the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.* He claims it as a prerogative of Deity: *I wound and I heal, I kill and I make alive.* God acts as the proper Sovereign of life, when he removes any out of the world, in whatsoever season or circumstance: he has the *keys of hell and death;* of the invisible world, and the passage into it. And this is always a reason of silence and satisfaction. When *Nadab and Abihu*, the two sons of *Aaron*, presumptuously *offered strange fire before the Lord;* and an immediate and extraordinary vengeance overtook them, 'tis said, *And Aaron held his peace.* When *Samuel* related the terrible judgment upon *Eli's* house,

con-

Acts xvii.
26.

Psal. xxxi.
15.

Job xiv. 5.

Deut. xxxii.
19.

Levit. x. 8.
1 Sam. iii.
18.

concerning the death of his sons *Hophni* and *Phineas*, he said, *'Tis the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* When *Job* received the heavy tidings of the death of all his children in a violent manner, while they were eating and drinking in their elder brother's house; *He rent his mantle, and shaved his head,* expressions of a deep sorrow, *and fell upon the ground and worshipped:* i. e. he shewed a becoming and a religious concern: and as soon as he recovered himself, he made this wise and humble reflection; *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, the earth, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.* He has a right to take his own gifts, who always retains his own propriety, and only lends us the use of them for a season.

And his dominion is uncontrollable, as well as absolute; and always takes place: *Behold he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say to him, what dost thou? And, who hath resisted his will?* Nor is he accountable to his creatures for his proceedings: *God is greater than man, why dost thou strive against him, for he giveth not an account of any of his matters?* He is infinitely above us, and not to be arraigned at our bar; or obliged to let us into the secrets of his government, and the reasons of his disposals: that were for the judge to descend to the bar. We may say of the time of death, what the apostle says of another dispensation of providence, *Nay but,* *O man,*

Job i. 20.

Job ix. 12.

xxxiii. 13.

Rom. ix.

20.

Job xiv. 5.

O man, who art thou who repliest against God? It is finally to be resolved into the sovereign will of God, and his absolute pleasure; and this consideration alone, ought to satisfy us, tho' nothing else could be said about it. But the will of God is always reasonable, and we may, without presumption, assign other reasons of this conduct, tho' we cannot pretend to take in all his views, or dive to the bottom of his designs. And therefore,

2. 'Tis a point of *wisdom*. We are born mortal, and under a sentence of death. This is the state of fallen nature, and the consequence of the original threatening, *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*. And the Apostle makes it the standing effect of sin, *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*. We have the seeds of mortality in our nature, and tend to a dissolution by our make and constitution, tho' no accident or disease ever befall us; and we are under the sentence of the violated law, and liable to the execution of it every moment, from our birth to our dissolution. It must be executed some time or other: That is ascertained by the divine law, and evident by universal experience; 'Tis *appointed for men once to die; and there is no discharge from that war*. There have been but two exceptions in all the generations of men for more than five thousand years, that of *Enoch* and *Elias*, by a peculiar favour, and for an extraordinary purpose, who were translated alive, and carried

Rom. v.
12.

ried immediately up to heaven. It was a noble saying to this purpose, of *Anaxagoras*, one of the eminent *Greek Philosophers*, upon the tidings of his son's death; *I knew that I begat a mortal, and that he was liable to death when he first came into the world* *.

But now the *time* and the *season* of it is not settled by the divine law; that does not say, we shall die either old or young. 'Tis left to the divine pleasure, and is a point of wisdom, in what season of life, or circumstance of things, the sentence shall take place. God is at liberty to fix the time as he pleases, and to execute the sentence in what part of life he sees fit, whether in youth, or old age. And 'tis highly reasonable to suppose, That the *only wise God* chooses that period of life for our removal out of the world, which, all circumstances consider'd, is fittest and best, and which we could not but approve if we knew them all. When any therefore are removed in early life, as there is nothing uncommon and extraordinary, or beyond what is usual, and may be expected at any time; so 'tis nothing but what he has a right to do by the constitution of his law, and has reserved the judgment of to himself. But more particularly still,

3. 'Tis a display of his *all-sufficiency*, and to shew that he needs not the best instruments,

* Nihil, inquit, mihi inexpectatum aut novum nuntias: ego enim illum ex me natum sciebam esse mortalem ——— atque ut mori neminem solere qui non vixerit, ita nec vivere aliquem quidem posse, qui non sit moriturus. *Val. Max. l. 7. c. 10.*

and the most fitted for his service, but that he can do without them, or raise up others in their room. When God takes away an eminently good and useful person out of the world, it makes a great gap, like the fall of a fair spreading oak in a forrest, or a *standard bearer* in an army. We are often apt to despond in such a case, and to say, Religion will die in such a family with such a person who belong'd to it, and was the great example and support of it. The interest of God will sink in such a place, with such an active and useful person, especially, if he was of a publick character, of singular worth, of great esteem and influence, and remarkably owned and prospered. 'Tis ready to give us discouraging views, and make us think with the prophet, That we shall be *left alone*, and that none will remain to *bear up the pillars of the earth*, to support the interest of goodness, and the cause of liberty in the world, &c.

But now we often find it otherwise, and that we judge by wrong measures, and form unsuitable conceptions of the great God. *His thoughts and ways are not like ours*. He sometimes removes eminent instruments of publick good, to make room for others to stand up in their places, and fill the vacancy they have made. He raises up other instruments whom he designs to serve him, and gives them an opportunity of appearing in the world. Some by such providences have been drawn out of great obscurity, and placed in greater eminency; and drawn forth to greater activity and under-

undertakings, than their more private stations did admit or require. Thus God raised up *Joshua* upon the death of *Moses*. One would have thought that *Moses's* great experience and authority, among that froward and rebellious people, could never have been made up; and that none was so fit to bring them into the promis'd land, as he who in such a wonderful manner brought them out of *Egypt*, and carried them thro' the wilderness: And yet *Joshua* was honour'd to do that, which *Moses* was not thought worthy of. And young *Elisha* had a double portion of *Elijah's* spirit, when he was taken up from him, who was the *chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof*. The residue of the spirit is with God, and he can furnish and spirit others for his service, from whom the most eminent and useful receive all their capacities and success. He plainly shews by such dispensations, that he can never be at a loss for proper instruments to do his work, and accomplish his designs, who has the framing and forming them in his own hands. He can easily raise up others to serve him, who can raise up *children to Abraham*, out of the *stones of the street*; so he *hides pride from man*, and forbids *glorying* in the creature, that *no flesh should glory in his presence*, but that *he who glorieth, should glory in the Lord*. How God will supply the present vacancy he only knows; but we have reason to expect his direction and care, who has remarkably provided for us in this kind several times over.

4. 'Tis in great *mercy* to themselves. 'Tis a great kindness to them, tho' 'tis a grief and loss to us. Thus, for example; He sometimes removes them from the *evil* of the world, and impending calamities coming upon it. So the prophet represents this case: *The righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking, or having walked, in his integrity.* In that case they are safely housed before the impending storm, and lodged in the ark before the deluge comes. 'Tis certainly a wise act of kindness in the great God to lay up his treasure in a publick danger, and place them out of the reach of harm. The death of excellent and useful persons has sometimes betokened approaching judgments upon the world; for good men are the greatest strength, as well as the glory of the places where they live, and their removal is like the taking the ark of God by the *Philistines*, when the *glory* was departed from *Israel*, and judgments came upon the *Philistines*. God could not destroy wicked *Sodom*, till *Lot* and his family were removed out of it. 'Tis a remarkable passage of *Eliphaz* to *Job*; *He shall deliver the island of the innocent, and it is delivered by the pureness of his hands:* That is, in modern language, for the sake of the puritans who live in it; I mean all righteous and upright men. *St. Austin's* death was observed to be the forerunner of the terrible devastations

Isai. xlvii.
1.

Job

Job xxii.
30.

vastations of *Hyppo*; and *Luther's* death was followed with the siege of *Heidleburgh*, the strongest place in the Protestant interest, and where was that noble library which was afterward transplanted to *Rome*, and is now in the *Vatican*. God only knows what miseries are coming upon the world at any time, and the great decay of all virtue, and the abounding of impiety and wickedness, is always a threatening presage. And in that case, to live longer would only be a calamity, and like putting back into a tempestuous sea, and venturing afresh in the midst of dangers, at the harbour's mouth.

Or they may be taken from the *snare*s of life, and the temptations of sin, which might prove a great disadvantage to them; and from all the conflicts and hazards of the Christian life, which they are sure to be exercised with. Death is a discharge from the Christian warfare, and a release from all danger. When God removes useful persons in the midst of their days, 'tis very grievous and afflicting: It certainly has a dark side, and we are often apt to pore too much upon it. But there is a brighter and better view of the case which is to be considered and taken into the account; that tho' they are taken from present comforts and enjoyments, and further service and usefulness unto others; yet they are taken from the evils of life too, and all farther danger of evil to themselves. The wise God, who *knows the end from the beginning*, and to whose all-comprehending mind all future events lie distinctly

2 Pet. ii.
20, 21.

iii. 17.

Heb. vi. 4.

tingly open ; foresees the tryals of continued life, and further engagements in the world ; the different circumstances of all the revolutions of time, and change of condition ; how they will affect and operate, and what would be the issue and event. Perhaps he sees they would be too hard for them, and disproportionate to their strength ; that the storm would rise so high as to endanger the oversetting them, and *after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, be again entangled and overcome; and when they have known the way of righteousness turn from the holy commandment ; and being led away by the error of the wicked, fall from their own steadfastness.* And when they were once enlightened, and *tasted of the heavenly gift, fall away.* In wise compassion to their infirmity, and tender concern for their safety, he takes them away in the midst of their days, and that they may not be *try'd above what they are able,* sometimes makes this *way of escape out of it.* How often have we seen instances of hopeful beginnings, and some progress in religion, by the weight of worldly cares, and the fatal baits of pleasure, in a long course of years, borne down and overcome. They are carried at length off from their biases, and down the stream, by the power of suitable and prevailing temptations, or greatly weakned and impaired by them. It might have been happier for them, to all appearance, if they had died several years sooner. How many after serious convictions and purposes of mind, under great afflictions of life, or upon

a sick bed, have soon forgot their former vows, and return'd to their former vanity of mind, and careless walk? 'Tis related in the life of the famous Earl of *Rochester*, that he dreaded the thoughts of living longer, and feared if God should restore him, he should lose the good impressions upon his mind, and not be able to endure the future temptations which might attend him *. Who can tell what some might possibly have proved, by a longer life of tryal, who appeared to have made a good end?

Besides, 'tis a great instance of divine mercy that he takes them the sooner to *heaven*, and gives them their reward betimes. They are not only the sooner out of danger, but the sooner happy. The remaining years of life in time, and in this world, are made up to them in the glories of heaven, and the blessedness of eternity. Whilst others live in the weakness and imperfections, and with the many struggles and conflicts of the Christian life, they are set free from the body of sin, and perfectly conformed to God. They are employ'd in sinless service and perfect love. They are safe arrived at the harbour of rest, while others are longer out, and tost in a tempestuous sea. When God removes them in the midst of their days, he prevents the further service and enjoyment of life; they leave their mourning friends, and all their prospects and designs of good: But then he brings them the sooner to glory, and rewards them who have wrought only *one hour*, the first hour of

* See his Life by Dr. *Barnet*.

the day, while others are left to bear the *heat and burden of the day*. He does them no hurt to take them from the good of this world, and bestow upon them infinitely better, to remove them from their friends and comforts here below, and carry them to *Abraham's bosom*, and the society of angels and saints in heaven. They live out the rest of their days, which we spend under so many disadvantages, in a better state, and what was wanting to them in this life, is all made up in eternal life. They are join'd to the *general assembly* above, and serve God without any sinful defect, and with the highest satisfaction and joy. And how wise and kind is this? How greatly have they the advantage of us?

I might add here, That God will accept the *purposes* of their heart, and what they further designed for his glory in the world, which their early death prevented the execution of: *They* will not be lost to them, but turn to a comfortable account; as God told *David* just before his death, *Thou didst well that it was in thy heart to build an house to my name*. Again,

1 Kings
viii. 18.

5. It may be considered as an act of *justice*, and as the punishment of sin. This is the known reason of all afflicting dispensations to ourselves and others. 'Tis sin which provokes the anger of God, and brings down judgment upon us: even death itself is the fruit and *wages of sin*. Now God may remove useful persons in the midst of their days, in rebuke for their *own* sin. He may see fit to contend with them for former offences,

ces, or any notable miscarriage and escape of life, by cutting their days short on earth, tho' their souls are accepted and saved. Particularly for disobedience to parents; for as the *fifth* commandment is the *first* commandment with promise, and the promise is, that *their days shall be long on the earth*; so no wonder if God sometimes cuts short the lives of the disobedient, and punishes them with the contrary threatning, *That they shall not live out half their days*. 'Tis possible they may be taken out of the world, when they are not cast into hell, and that they may lose their lives for their disobedience, when they don't lose their souls, and the punishment may extend no further than to the temporal life. It was the general corruption of the old world, which brought that sweeping destruction upon all the inhabitants of it; and the disobedience and murmuring of the *Israelites*, provoked the Lord to cut off that whole generation who came out of *Egypt*, young and old, and none were suffered to enter into *Canaan*, but only *Caleb* and *Joshua*, who had followed fully after the Lord. They all perished in the wilderness by death, tho' there is no reason to doubt but many of them were pious, and their souls saved in the day of the Lord. He took vengeance on their inventions, tho' he forgave their iniquities. God suffered *Moses* to see the land of *Canaan* from mount *Nebo*, but commanded him to die there, because he trespassed against him among the children of *Israel*, at the waters of *Meribah*. *Hezekiah*, another

Pl. xcix. 8.

Deut. xxxii. 40.

another good man, because he *rendered not to the Lord according to his benefits*, and his heart was lifted up, was sick unto death, and had the sentence of death in himself. He breaks out in the most mournful and moving complaints; *He said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave. I am deprived of the residue of my years. I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living, and behold man no more with the inhabitants of the earth; my age is departed and removed from me*; tho' upon his humbling himself, and earnest prayer, the sentence was reversed, and fifteen years added to his life.

2 Kings
xx.

Or else they may be removed for the sins of *others*. God may take them away for our *over-indulgence*, and too great opinion and expectation from them. We may kill them with our kindness; and by setting our hearts too much upon them, provoke the jealousy of the Lord against our selves. When we put them in the room of God, and place our confidence and hope in them, we make them an *image of jealousy*, and no wonder if in just displeasure, he breaks it all to pieces. 'Tis probable *David* was criminal this way towards *Abfalom*, a lovely and beautiful, but rebellious and disobedient son. His disconsolate passion at his death bespeaks an immoderate love to him living. And the death of his child by *Bathsheba* was the execution of the threatening by *Nathan*; *The child also who is born of thee shall surely die*. And we find God threatens the house of *David* this way, *Psal. lxxxix.* He had

2 Sam.
xviii. 33.

--xii. 14.

had sworn once to David, that his seed should continue for ever, and his throne as the sun before him. But the Psalmist afterwards complains of God's punishing for sin, *Thou hast cast off and abhorred, and been wroth with thy anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant, and profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries, and made them to rejoice:* and particularly v. 45. *The days of his youth hast thou shortened, and hast covered him with shame. Selah.* This was remarkably fulfilled in the case of *Josiah* and *Jehoiachin*, who died young; and of *Zedekiah*, who was disgracefully condemned as a rebel to the King of *Babylon*, to lose his eyes, and remain a prisoner all his days. The renown-^{2 Kings} ed *Gustavus Adolphus*, the great patron of^{xxv. 6.} the reformation, is reported to have said in the midst of his remarkable victories and success, "That he believed God was about to lay him aside, because the eyes of all Europe were drawn upon him, and their expectations raised to so great an height."

Or else, it may be on the other hand, when they are neglected and slighted. God sometimes punishes the ungrateful world, by removing early eminent persons, whom they did not know how to value or treat with kindness. The excellent of the earth are taken away, for the neglect, or ill treatment they meet with in it: *Jerusalem killed some of their own prophets, and stoned them who were sent unto them.* When men of great usefulness

ness are treated with coldness and disregard and great excellencies are overlooked for the sake of little frailties and mistakes; God may raise the value of them, by removing them; and make us sensible of their worth and consequence to the world by the want of them. The apostle *Paul* was contemptible in his *presence* and *speech* to some of the *Corinthians*, tho' they allowed his letters to be *weighty* and *powerful*; probably, as some learned men think, because he was of less stature, and of a stammering speech. It may be said of some excellently pious, and valuable men, with respect to the disregard of their friends, as well as their sufferings from their enemies; *Of whom the world was not worthy*. But let no man think it a light matter to slight the gifts and graces of any of God's faithful servants, and grieve and wound their spirits by a vain conceit, or a wanton curiosity.

6. 'Tis for the *good* of others, and to exercise the *graces* and virtues of those who survive. 'Tis one of the greatest trials of life, to part with beloved relations and friends out of this world, especially in their younger years of life. When God comes into our houses and neighbourhoods, and gives death a commission to seize a near relation, and take away a dear friend, what does he mean by it? what is the language of the dispensation? Why, plainly to try our graces, to see how we will behave our selves under one of the greatest difficulties of life; how well we will take it to *receive evil things at the hand of the Lord*,

as

as well as *good things*. When the same hand which supports our being, and reaches out all our blessings, sees fit to touch us in a tender point, and blasts the *gourd* under which we sat with delight, this naturally calls forth the exercise of some peculiar graces, and gives them a greater advantage; they appear in a greater glory, and redound more to the honour of God. So he tries our faith and trust in him, when he strikes off our hold from the creatures; and our patience and submission to his will, when he lays a heavy burden upon us. When an afflicted Christian can lie down at the foot of God, and humbly adore the hand, and kiss the rod that smites him; can put his mouth in the dust, and *hold his peace, possess his soul in his patience, and accept the punishment of his iniquity*; yea, can approve his conduct towards him, and *bless his holy name*; how highly honourable is this to God, and how glorious does a Christian appear? what a reputation does it give to the Christian principles, and to the divine grace?

And what can be more proper to awaken our concern, and excite our diligence in every service of God, and duty of life? What so powerful and effectual to keep a lively sense upon our minds, and be a constant spur to duty? Should we not work *with all our might*; and *with fear and trembling*, when there is *no working in the grave*, and the *night* is approaching? when this is the only working time, and all our opportunities and helps, the whole state of trial and mercy is measured

2 Pet. i.

by the short time of life, and determined by it? The apostle thought it meet to stir up the Christians to *give all diligence*, because he knew he was shortly to *put off this tabernacle*. What so proper as the thoughts of death, to inspire our sluggish souls with life and vigour, and make us more *fervent in spirit*, and *zealous of good works*? to keep up a lively sense of religion in the world, and a constant care to please God? hereupon,

7. To be a standing monument of human *frailty*, and give *warning* to all about them. When God removes younger persons out of the world, especially of great eminence and worth, 'tis a standing memorial of mortality to others, and plain evidence that such may die. Nothing is so sensible, and apt to impress our minds, as the death of those of our standing and circumstance of life. If we saw only elder persons drop into the grave, and that death always observed the order of nature, we might possibly think, that it did not much concern us, and that our time was a great way off. But God gives warning to us by the death of others like our selves, not only of the same nature, but of the same age and rank with our selves; our familiar friends, with whom we daily conversed, and maintained the offices of friendship and religion together. 'Tis a home instance to younger Christians, and younger ministers, when any such of eminence and worth are taken away; and they *being dead*, *speak* to us who survive, *prepare to follow*; *be ye also ready*,

And

And to be sure, elder persons are concerned to take the warning; for if younger than we die before us, to be sure we must quickly follow; and every person who dies young, loudly calls upon those more advanced in life, to be mindful of approaching death, and attend to the shortness and uncertainty of life. This is a gracious dispensation to a careless world, to teach us wisdom at others cost, and make their death instructing and monitory; to remind us of what so nearly concerns us, and quicken our regards, where we are so very apt to forget.

8. Perhaps it may be considered as an instance of our *conformity* to Christ. As the servant must not be above his Lord, and we must not expect kinder usage from the world than he met with; so we must not wonder if we are suffered to stay no longer in it than he did. Our Lord lived a private life with his parents in *Galilee*, and was known only as the *son of Mary*, and the *carpenter's son*, till he was about thirty years of age, the time when the priests under the law were admitted to the office of priesthood, and the service of the tabernacle; and then he appeared upon the stage of the world, and entered upon his publick ministry. And he spent but about three years in all his preaching and miracles, before his *decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem*. He had a short ministry of three years, and a life of thirty three. And what if God sees fit at any time, that any *disciple whom Jesus loves*, and who bears a great similitude

John xxi.
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to his Lord, in intire devotedness to God, and zeal for his glory, be made conformable to Christ in this respect, and be allowed no longer time for his ministry and life than he had. Our Lord tells *Peter* concerning *John*, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* And if he will that any should come to him sooner than others, what is that to us? have we any reason to complain? Or does he act unsuitably to himself? Our deceased friend had something a longer ministry, but not quite so long a life. How agreeable is it to say of any of our friends; He was removed in the midst of his days, but he lived and preached as long as Christ did, or thereabouts.

Perhaps they have done a great deal of work in a little time, as he did; and tho' no good man ever lived to do all that was in his heart for God, but the man Christ Jesus, or could say as he did before his death, *It is finished*; I have done all I ever design'd to do for God before I die; yet they may have filled up their short course with great service, and run over a great compass of ground in their short race. Perhaps they have *begun a good work*, and left impressions on the minds of many, which others must *perform* and perfect. And as they rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, and in the presence of their glorified Redeemer; so I doubt not they are pleased with every instance of likeness and agreement to him.

9. 'Tis to make *heaven* more desirable to us, and raise our hearts more powerfully thither. Every good man lost out of this world,

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is gained to the other; and heaven is the richer for the death of every saint. They go to the *Spirits of just men made perfect*, when they leave the society of the church of God on earth. How many of our Christian friends and acquaintance have got the start of us, and gone to heaven before us, younger and elder ones? One would be tempted to envy their felicity. And should not this be a powerful attractive to our sluggish earthly minds, and raise them up above this region of sense and sin, and make us oftner breath in a purer air, and converse with our departed friends; especially, *to remember them who have had the rule over* ^{Heb. xiii.} *us, and spoken to us the word of our Lord.* Should not this make heaven more familiar and more agreeable to our thoughts, that so many are called thither, who once dwelt in flesh, and were dear to us, and high in our esteem?

And tho' God is the chief good, the center of blessedness, and rest of souls; and that is the greatest reason and motive of our choice and love of heaven, and all our desires and hopes of it; yet the divine Being is vastly above our thoughts, and our best conceptions of him are very imperfect; *Behold God is great,* ^{Job xxxvi.} *and we know him not.* ^{26.} But the consideration of the glorified Redeemer in our nature, and of our fellow Christians there, is a more sensible thing, and a great relief to our thoughts, and is both more within our reach, and more apt to impress and affect our minds. And does not this make it worth the while? What a
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wise expedient is this to help the infirmities of our faith, excite the exercise of devotion, to promote the heavenly mind and life, and further our preparation for heaven?

Upon these several accounts this strange conduct of providence may appear reasonable, and be justified in some measure to our minds.

II. Let me direct you briefly to the proper *improvement* of this contemplation, and shew how it may be made useful to ourselves, either to regulate our conduct, or affect our minds? It would naturally lead us to many serious reflections.

I. We should *reverence* and adore the divine *sovereignty and wisdom*. Things are sometimes so circumstanced as to be dark, and difficult to account for, and very grievous and afflicting in the dispensations of providence; *Clouds and darkness are round about him; and his ways are often in the deep, and his footsteps are not known*. He sits encompassed with venerable darkness, and walks in untrodden paths; but then *righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne*; and his *ways are always equal*. There is wisdom and reason in the most involved appearance of things, and the most unsearchable councils of God; and we ought to justify God in all his dealings with us, and submit to his disposals, and never to repine or complain at the hand of God, when it presses hardest, and we are most at a loss about it. *Who art thou who resistest against God, or pretendest to reason and wrangle the matter over with him? Has he*

not a right to do what he pleases with his own? Does he do us any wrong, when he takes away what is his, and calls back again, what we first received from him, and enjoy'd so long by his leave? Let us adore with humble silence the mysterious dispensations of Providence, and acquiesce in his wise and sovereign pleasure. Let us *hold our peace*, from any complaint; or only say, *Let him do what seemeth him good*; and *Blessed be the name of the Lord*. *O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Rom. xi. 33.

2. Let us *look* more to *God*, and live more entirely upon him. Let us learn this point of spiritual wisdom from such dispensations, to look at the instruments of any good, less, and God, more; and lay less stress upon them, and more upon him. We are very apt to exceed in our regards to creatures, and the more, the more excellent they are; and to confine and limit the holy One to particular means, and particular persons; and we often find ourselves disappointed and bereaved. Let this teach us to look more at the fountain head, from whom the gifts and graces of the best proceed, and on whom the success of all their endeavours depends; who gives them all that was excellent, and made all that use of them they were of to us, and who can raise up other instruments, and furnish them with like abilities, and give the same effect. *Paul planteth and Apollo watereth, but God giveth the increase:*

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'Tis *by the grace of God they are what they are* ; and, *our sufficiency is of God*. Let us then look beyond the intermediate causes to the first cause, and fetch all our supplies more immediately from God, and live in a closer dependence upon him, in use of all prescrib'd means. Eye the living God more, and dying creatures less : there we shall never be disappointed ; here we cannot fail of being so.

3. Let us *comfort* ourselves in their loss by the consideration of the mercy it is to them. How much more safe and happy are they in heaven, than they could be here on earth. 'Tis well with them, however it is with us. They are set out of the reach of every danger, and possess of the most desirable good, advanced to the highest honours, and enjoy the purest pleasures. And should not we be *comforted* concerning them, tho' we *grieve* for ourselves? Let us not think much at their happiness, or their early arrival at it, because we want their presence and help : God will take care of us, if we are faithful to him, and of his own interest ; when the best instruments on earth are removed. Let not us be uneasy that they are happy, and repine at that which is the matter of their joy. When we have a well-grounded hope of the happy state of our departed friends, we should rather rejoice at their preferment and advancement, at the greater improvement of their state, and their happy and advantageous change ; that it is so much better with them than it is with us, or than ever it was before. So our Lord told

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his sorrowful disciples, *If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father.* John xiv. 28.

4. Yet we should be *humbled* under the sense of their loss, and lament it as a great affliction. We must not be insensible of the hand of God upon us neither. When excellent instruments of God's glory are removed, 'tis a great loss to the world, and to the church of God: All the usefulness of their lives are at an end, who might have lived many years, and done great good to many souls. And especially when we have reason to think, that we had any hand in it, or contributed any thing to it, either by too great, or too little regard to them; we should be sensible of the affliction, and humbled for our sin. *Tho' we must not weep for them*, 'tis their advantage and gain; yet we ought to *weep for ourselves*, for 'tis a loss to us, and to the world about us. And when 'tis in a qualified degree, and with due submission to the will of God, we may fitly lament their loss. *Jesus wept* at the death of *Lazarus*, whom he loved; and the elders of *Ephesus*, at *Paul's* departure from *Miletus*, *because they should see his face no more.* Acts xx. 28. And the apostle don't forbid, but only regulates our grief, concerning them who are *asleep*; that we *sorrow not as others, who have no hope*; with 1 Thes. iv. 13. the hopeless despairing sorrow of the heathen world, who were ignorant of the resurrection, and uncertain about eternal life. Something is certainly due to natural relation, and the tender affections of our minds, to the resentments of gratitude, and the obligations of

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duty, in such a case ; and 'tis very allowable to drop a tear over the graves of our departed friends, tho' tis very easy to exceed. There indeed is our danger ; for the passions are the unruly part of our nature, are difficultly kept within bounds ; and sometimes need all the restraints which reason and religion are able to give.

5. It should teach us to *value* useful men while they live, and make the best use of them we can. Labour to be better for them, and get some good by them, while you have them.

Joh. v. 35. *John the Baptist was a burning and shining light, in his ministry and conversation ; and the people rejoiced in it for a season ; for he died young too.* Consider them as dying creatures, who may be removed in the midst of their days, or in a little time from us ; let us not lose the benefit of their help and converse while it may be had ; but wisely improve for spiritual advantage their gifts and graces, their wisdom and experience, their kindness and concern for us while they last. Let us never have reason to say, That a useful minister or friend was early taken away, and I made no use of them while they lived, or was little the better for them : I now regret the opportunity I lost, of great advantage by their service.

6. The reasonableness of *early religion*, and being in good earnest in it. And here let me caution you against dangerous *delays*, and reckoning upon long life, and neglecting present duty. How natural is this in youth and health ? Who is there, at such an age, who thinks of dying, or ever seriously put the case to himself ?

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Who don't expect to live many years longer, if not to arrive to old age? We plainly see this in the schemes and designs men lay in the world, which the longest life seldom suffices to accomplish. They reckon upon attaining to such a condition of life, to execute such purposes of their minds, to reach to such a pitch of greatness, and such a proportion of years; and in the mean time neglect the great end of life, and are cut off in the midst of all their other designs. *They reckon their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places throughout all generations:* But *this their way is their folly*, tho' they *bless themselves*, and *posterity approve their sayings*. The rich fool in the gospel reckon'd upon *taking his ease*, and having *goods laid up for many years*, when he had lived his last day already, and that *night his soul was to be required of him*. What a disappointment must it be to die young, to one who never doubted to live to be old; and to put off the execution of every serious purpose, 'till death overtakes him, and prevents it all?

And let the consideration of dying young be a powerful restraint from *youthful vanities* and vice. The sprightly vigour of nature, the gaiety of mind, and the high relish of sensible good, at such an age, commonly lead them to vanity of life, and forgetfulness of God. The suitable baits to various dispositions, and the constant solicitations of temptations round about them, powerfully insinuate, and strike dangerously upon the senses and imagination, which are generally predominant, and

carry them to looseness and licentiousness, and presumption and security. Keep your minds under the strong impression of your mortal state. Use this thought upon every occasion to preserve your innocence, and fortify your minds against the impressions of evil. Oppose this consideration to all the vanity of your minds, and assaults of temptation. Sit down one serious moment, O careless and licentious youth, and consider that death is hastening towards thee, whether thou think'st of it or not, and may suddenly surprize thee in all thy security and mirth! *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth — but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment.* Death, the *King of terrors*, like the *hand-writing upon the wall*, will quickly appear, and make thy countenance fall, and thy thoughts troubled, and the joints of thy loins be loosed, and thy knees smite against one another, as it did to a great king, in the midst of a splendid feast. Death will humble the stoutest heart, and make the vainest creature serious. Improve the time and opportunity of life to secure the safety of thy soul, and promote the usefulness of thy life, and waste not the precious moments of short uncertain life in idle neglects, ensnaring diversions, or bold violations of the law of God.

If men die in the midst of their days, 'tis infinitely reasonable to be religious betimes, because nothing else can make us secure and happy. Men commonly take up with the first impressions of their education, whatsoever they happen to be; and satisfy themselves with

a *traditional* religion, the religion of their ancestors, and the places where they live, or of those they converse with and most esteem; without ever considering the matter, or settling upon right grounds; neither understanding their religion, or making it properly their own. And it is commonly answerable, mere outward lifeless form, or a sudden flash and blaze; without proper convictions of mind, or kindly relish and savour of things; without sincerity or zeal; without constancy and perseverance, especially in trials or opposition. But this is not a religion to live or die with. Let me advise you to be wisely, as well as seriously religious; upon a thorough satisfaction of mind, and in good earnest. Use the best judgment you have in the greatest concern of life: In-
deavour to be well grounded in the great principles and duties of the gospel religion, and to have both a distinct and practical knowledge of them. Let it become the governing habit of your mind, and run through all the actions of your life. Make religion your *business*; be constantly diligent and watchful in all the duties, and all the snares of life, in a dependence upon the divine grace. Let younger Christians be ambitious to make up the loss of useful lives, which are cut off in the midst of their days, and *supply their lack of service* to the church of God; that the interest of God and religion may suffer as little as may be, by the death of any who were great examples of it, and greatly instrumental to promote it.

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And let me particularly recommend it to younger persons to bethink themselves of their *baptismal* covenant, and of solemnly renewing it at the *Lord's table* ; to perfect their profession, and become complete Christians. Remember the death of Christ, by which you hope for acceptance with God, in the way he has prescrib'd, before your own death overtake you. If you are willing to be the Lord's with all your heart, and without reserve ; and to take him, through the blessed Redeemer, for your Lord and portion, whom you are to obey and enjoy ; doubt not of your being prepared, and fear not a gracious acceptance with him.

7. What reason of thankfulness for *longer life* and opportunity? How great is the mercy of continued life in a view of further usefulness, and better preparation for heaven ; to be spared beyond the midst of our days, and to more advanced life, when many others are taken off in the midst of their days? How many have we survived and follow'd to the grave, of our acquaintance and friends, younger and stronger than ourselves, more likely to live, and capable of service than we were? We are *spared yet one year longer*, and are continued under the means of grace, and calls of mercy ; and have the opportunities of further usefulness to others, and improvement to ourselves. 'Tis certainly a great mercy in itself, and in the intention of God ; for the *long-suffering of the Lord is salvation*. Let us not alter the nature of it by continued neglects and dis-

disobedience, and turn it into a greater aggravation of sin. Improve it with all thankfulness while it lasts, as a valuable and accountable talent. I only add,

8. Let us all be mindful of our *own mortality*, and quickened to daily preparation. Remember that you are dying creatures as well as others, under the same sentence of death, and liable to the execution of it. When a good man is removed out of the world, consider with yourselves, "What would have been my condition, if I had been removed, and my soul had gone in his soul's stead? Whither would death have landed me? What would have been my lot and state in the world?"

Let the thoughts of death quicken our preparation for it: Do something every day for eternity; that you may be found in a safe state, and prepared frame of mind; and that whatsoever *hour of the night*, or age of life our Lord shall come, we shall not be surprized unprepared, but be found *ready, and watching, and waiting, and looking* for his appearance.

Particularly, let me address myself in a few words to *younger Ministers*, whither the present providence particularly points. Let this awakening instance of mortality, of one of your own number and order, of your age and standing, of your friendship and acquaintance, and whom ye valued and esteemed, excite your attention and regard. Hear your deceas'd friend and brother, thus bespeaking every one of you: ——— "Be more frequent in the
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“ thoughts of your own death, for the pro-
 “ *phets don't live for ever*, and sometimes die
 “ young, and in the *midst of their days*. Be
 “ more careful about the safety and prosperity
 “ of your own souls, as well as the instruction
 “ and salvation of others ; that you may not
 “ *preach* to others, and be *castaways* yourselves :
 “ And of your daily walk and conversation,
 “ not only to be *unblameable*, but *examples to*
 “ *the flock*. Be diligent and faithful in all
 “ your preparations, and ministrations ; that
 “ you may fill up the time of life with proper
 “ duty, and *finish your course with joy*, and
 “ the *ministry you have received of the Lord*.
 “ Let the thoughts of death, your own and
 “ others, inspire you with tender compassion,
 “ and warm zeal for the good of *dying sinners*,
 “ and precious and immortal souls ; and make
 “ you speak and preach as sinners to sinners ;
 “ and dying men to dying men. *Watch over*
 “ *the souls* of others, as those who must give
 “ *an account* : Indevour by faithful instructi-
 “ on and warning, to stand *clear of the blood*
 “ *of all men*, and that their blood may not be
 “ *required at your hands* ; but that you may
 “ find comfort in your present service, and
 “ they among whom you labour, may be your
 “ *joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the*
 “ *Lord*.” And may the living and unchange-
 able God make us *wise to understand and con-*
sider our latter end ; and teach us *so to number*
our days that we may apply our hearts unto
wisdom ; that we may be found *ready*, and
found of our judge in peace, and may have con-
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fidence at his appearing, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

I have finished what I proposed from the text, and shall speak now, as this mournful occasion directs, of our deceased friend; of whom I shall give this exemplary and instructing account, from a long intimacy with him, and the undoubted testimony of others. And I desire to *speake the truth in Christ*, and would not *lie for God*. I am informed by them who knew him in his earliest youth, That there were manifest indications of a very *serious spirit*, almost as soon as he could speak, and that from the manly gravity of his deportment in the first years of life, he never was a child. He told a worthy minister, his dear and intimate friend *, That as long as he could remember any thing, he remembered his being concerned for the salvation of his soul; and that he always preferred his books and his closet, to the diversions of the childish age. He loved the conversation of ministers and Christians, especially when it turned upon religion; and from the fifth year of his age, the impressions of the best things never wore off; in which he received great assistance from an elder sister of eminent piety. He had a natural love of learning, and inclination to the ministry; and was much employ'd at this time in reading the best practical books of religion, and promoting his spiritual edification.

* The Rev. Mr. Brodburst, of Birmingham in Warwickshire, Mr. Harvey's native Town.

He was educated for the ministry, some time under the care of the pious and ingenious Mr. *John Reynolds* of *Shrewsbury*; but chiefly under the learned Mr. *Hill* of *Derbyshire*, of whom he always spoke with particular respect; and Mr. *Jones* of *Tewksbury*. He made a great improvement in all the usual parts of *rational* learning, and was critically skilful in the *Greek* tongue, in which both his tutors were eminent. But he especially applied himself to the study of *Divinity*, as more agreeable to the temper of his mind, and design of his life. His inclinations to the *ministry* were too strong to be diverted by any worldly views, but grew up with him from his infancy. When his tender and prudent father feared lest his stature should render him despicable, and be an obstruction to his acceptance and usefulness in the world; he declared to a friend as his deliberate sense, " That he was " willing of any pains, or any reproach for " term of life, if he might be the instrument " of saving one soul." Such was his high sense of the worth of souls, such his ardent zeal for God so early in life. And God granted the thing he desired, without the difficulty he was willing to undergo for the sake of it. Here he used to have set meetings with a select number of fellow pupils designed for the ministry, at their several chambers, for solemn prayer to God for a blessing upon their studies: a custom which he afterwards proposed to some younger ministers of his particular acquaintance in this city. He spent many hours,

hours, and sometimes parts of a day in prayer; not from a superstitious fear, or as an imposed task, but for the kindly breathings of his soul to God, and as a way of delightful communion with him.

His *natural capacities* were excellent. He had a sound judgment, a quick apprehension, a tenacious memory; as he read much, he retained what he read, and would give a surpriz-account of the sermons he heard, when his retired and close attention made him sometimes thought to be absent. He had a great justness and compass in his thoughts; a natural ease and propriety of expression, and a great mixture of gravity and liveliness, when he was engaged in any service, in his countenance, and in his speech.

As to his moral and *Christian* character, he was a man of thorough *sincerity*; an *Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile*. He was a stranger to artifice and deceit, and greatly disliked any appearance of them in others. He had an uncommon degree of genuine unaffected piety, and a deep and habitual sense of God visible upon his mind. He was of great diligence and application to his work: it was his constant delight and joy. He was very conscientious in his words and actions, perfectly inoffensive in his behaviour to others; and hated detraction, or taking unrighteous liberties with other mens characters and conduct: I remember not to have ever heard him *speak evil of any man*, in all my acquaintance with him. He delighted in religious conversation, and seldom cared to bear a part
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in any other, tho' he would be sometimes chearful too. Here he shone, and appeared with great advantage, and was most free and communicative. He had a great opinion of the good which might be done by it, when it turned upon useful and important subjects, and was managed with discretion, and with a serious design. Perhaps he was led to this by the remarkable instance which he told an intimate friend; That when he was a school-boy, his conversation about religion had been the means of the conversion of one who is now in the ministry; which account, he said, he received some years after from the person himself. He was always inquisitive after truth, and zealous in what he thought important, especially in what related to vital and practical religion; and greatly lamented the visible decays of it among Christians of all sorts in the present age. It appears now, that he kept a *diary*, for more than sixteen years together, of the state of his soul, and remarkable providences of God; in which are many wise and judicious remarks, and the most devout reflections and ejaculations, bewailing the disorders of his mind, imploring divine aids, and adoring the divine mercy, &c. A worthy minister of his intimate acquaintance, and who knew him from his youth, declares, "That in the latter part of his life, he considered him as a Christian fully grown, and arrived to the most advanced steps of the divine life, which are found among men on earth."

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As to his *ministerial* character, he was greatly furnished, beyond his years, and above the common rate. His discourses were always upon the most weighty and serious subjects; composed with great judgment, and disposed in the best order, delivered with a manly decency, and a becoming warmth and zeal, which engaged attention, and gave delight, and acquired him the great esteem of the serious and judicious, in all the congregations in city and country wherever he came. He did not affect a vain ostentation of learning or wit, but chose to appear *serious* and concerned, as one who was in good earnest himself, and intent upon doing good to the souls of men. He had great apprehensions of the *mediation* of Christ, and the standing *influences* of the divine Spirit, as the grand peculiarities of the Christian dispensation; and feared that the want of due regard to them, was one great reason of the languishing state of the Christian interest among us, and the frequent revolts from it.

When he first settled in this place, and engaged in constant work, he thought it proper to study over the *church controversy*, and not rest in the first impressions of education. He read the *London cases*, and other principal books, on both sides, with close application and impartiality; and settled at length, upon a deliberate judgment, in the principles of *moderate nonconformity*; which, he thought, stood upon the great principle of the reformation, *viz.* "The perfection of the scripture

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" ture rule, and the only authority of Christ
 " in the Christian church; and the unalie-
 " nable right of every man to judge accor-
 " ding to the best light and advantages of-
 " fered him, for himself." He stood firm
 upon a broad bottom; and satisfied himself to
 be faithful to his light, without censure, or
 uncharitableness to others; and thought he
 had the advantage of the narrow spirited on
 all sides, that he could worship God in the
 way he preferred, and at the same time own
 and *receive* fellow Christians of other com-
 munion, and was not confined by any prin-
 ciple, or prejudice of mind, within any little
 circle, or distinguishing denomination; or
 obliged to refuse actual communion, upon any
 proper occasions, with those who have all the
 essentials of the gospel religion, and whom
 Christ will own at last. He was truly a *pri-
 mitive Catholick*, who loved and owned all
 sincere Christians; and was of no one party
 exclusive of all the rest. He was just reading
 over the Christian writers of the three first
 centuries, when his sickness seized him.

He had great anxiety and solicitude about
 his choice at *Sudbury*, for some time together;
 and was desirous to know the will of God, by
 carefully weighing the circumstances of things;
 and determined to follow it, whoever should be
 of another opinion from him. His friends gene-
 rally apprehended him fit for this city, where
 there is the greatest extent of service, and the
 great resource of all reliefs to the country; and
 that the work there would be too great for his
 strength.

strength. Their uncommon value and affection to him, and the apprehensions he entertained of greater usefulness in a pastoral relation, among a considerable number of very serious people; determined his acceptance. When he was admonished by an elder minister, of the weakness of his constitution, he said, He was willing to venture his life in the service of God, wherever he should call him; that it was a good work, and he served a good Master, and he was not solicitous about the event. He told me, then in confidence, and with his usual modesty and humility; That he had spent a whole day in the exercises of prayer and devotion, for the divine direction and blessing upon his ministry; and next morning received the first motion of going to *Sudbury*. But they are bereaved, as well as the church of God, of his further labours; as *Paul and Silas essayed to go to Bithynia*, Acts xvi. 7. *but the Spirit suffered them not.* The little earthen vessel which contained so great a treasure, is broken, and we have returned it to the dust from whence it was taken: God has determined the matter, and prevented all our fears, as well as all our hopes, concerning him.

I must bear this testimony to his memory from the most intimate acquaintance, and I know I have the concurrence of my brethren, who best knew him; That I never knew any young minister of so serious a spirit, and so earnestly set for doing good. He was indeed ripe for service, and ripe for heaven betimes.

“ ture rule, and the only authority of Christ
 “ in the Christian church; and the unalienable
 “ right of every man to judge according to the best light and advantages offered him, for himself.” He stood firm upon a broad bottom; and satisfied himself to be faithful to his light, without censure, or uncharitableness to others; and thought he had the advantage of the narrow spirited on all sides, that he could worship God in the way he preferred, and at the same time own and receive fellow Christians of other communions, and was not confined by any principle, or prejudice of mind, within any little circle, or distinguishing denomination; or obliged to refuse actual communion, upon any proper occasions, with those who have all the essentials of the gospel religion, and whom Christ will own at last. He was truly a *primitive Catholick*, who loved and owned all sincere Christians; and was of no one party exclusive of all the rest. He was just reading over the Christian writers of the three first centuries, when his sickness seized him.

He had great anxiety and solicitude about his choice at *Sudbury*, for some time together; and was desirous to know the will of God, by carefully weighing the circumstances of things; and determined to follow it, whoever should be of another opinion from him. His friends generally apprehended him fit for this city, where there is the greatest extent of service, and the great resource of all reliefs to the country; and that the work there would be too great for his strength.

strength. Their uncommon value and affection to him, and the apprehensions he entertained of greater usefulness in a pastoral relation, among a considerable number of very serious people; determined his acceptance. When he was admonished by an elder minister, of the weakness of his constitution, he said, He was willing to venture his life in the service of God, wherever he should call him; that it was a good work, and he served a good Master, and he was not solicitous about the event. He told me, then in confidence, and with his usual modesty and humility; That he had spent a whole day in the exercises of prayer and devotion, for the divine direction and blessing upon his ministry; and next morning received the first motion of going to *Sudbury*. But they are bereaved, as well as the church of God, of his further labours; as *Paul and Silas essayed to go to Bithynia*, Acts xvi. 7. *but the Spirit suffered them not.* The little earthen vessel which contained so great a treasure, is broken, and we have returned it to the dust from whence it was taken: God has determined the matter, and prevented all our fears, as well as all our hopes, concerning him.

I must bear this testimony to his memory from the most intimate acquaintance, and I know I have the concurrence of my brethren, who best knew him; That I never knew any young minister of so serious a spirit, and so earnestly set for doing good. He was indeed ripe for service, and ripe for heaven betimes.

I can truly say, That I never heard him without pleasure, and often with admiration: Tho' I desire to be thankful to the *Father of lights*, for the excellent furniture, and serious spirits, and promising hopes, of many of the younger Ministers.

His sickness was a slow *fever*, which proved fatal, thro' the weakness of his constitution, before it was apprehended dangerous. He ventured out while the feverish disorder hung upon him, and much exhausted his spirits in a conversation with some younger persons, who greatly valued his ministry, to enlarge their minds to generous and worthy conceptions of the divine Being. When his books were packed up for his removal, he said to a friend, at the beginning of his sickness; "Perhaps I have a longer journey to go than to *Sudbury*;" and so it proved; for he died within one, on the same day he designed his journey thither. The slow advance of his distemper at first, which gave no apprehensions to those about him; and the sudden turn of it afterwards, prevented any expressions of his mind about his death; which I doubt not would have been of a piece with the rest of his life, and a fit close of it; greatly to the edification of those about him. He was often heard to pray the last night, and sometimes in *Latin*; I suppose for the greater freedom of his thoughts, and that he might not be understood by those who attended him.

He designed to have taken a solemn leave of the congregation, for whom he always expressed

expressed a sincere value, in a *farewel sermon*; as we had solemnly resigned him up, and committed him to the divine blessing, the last sacrament day at the Lord's table; for which he express'd the most affectionate gratitude. He had begun his sermon on 2 *Cor.* xiv. 13. The apostolical benediction; which he designed to publish to the world, and leave as a publick mark of his respect to you, and a help to the understanding of one of the most weighty and comprehensive expressions, most used in all the Christian churches, and perhaps one of the least considered, of any in the New Testament.

This was the Christian, this the Minister, whose conversation and labours we enjoy'd for almost seven years. I doubt not many found that benefit by his ministry, which will never be forgot; I am sure we have all a great account to give of the improvement of it. And God grant that our *profitting* by the sickness and death, as well as by the life and labours of his faithful servants, may *appear to all men*; and that we may *give our account* of them at last, with *joy and not with grief*.

F I N I S.

AN
EPI TAPH.

To the PIOUS MEMORY of

Mr. *SAMUEL HARVEY*,

HERE lye the Ruins of a lowly Tent,
Where the seraphick Soul of *Harvey* spent
Its mortal Years. A Name divinely blest:
Too strait the Building for th' illustrious Guest!
A flash of Zeal shot from the Realms of Day
Aids the slow Fever to consume the Clay,
And bears the Saint up thro' the Starry Road;
So *Enoch*, so *Elijah* went to God.
What happy Prophet shall his Mantle find,
Heir to the double Portion of his Mind?

*Sic Musâ jam veterascenti inter justissimos
Amicorum & Ecclesiae fletus
Harvæo suo parentat*

I. W A T T S.

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